

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 INT-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /074 W

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R 281016Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7445

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EMIN, TH

SUBJ: LABOR DEVELOPMENTS

REF: BANGKOK 1231 B) BANGKOK 1338

1. PRACHATIPATAI THAI LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER JAN 28 CARRIED AN INTERVIEW WITH SUPHAP SUGAN, A REPRESENTATIVE OF TIN MINERS IN PHUKET PROVINCE. SINCE JAN 24, WORKERS HAVE BEEN ON STRIKE AT THREE TIN-DREDGING COMPANIES, AO KHAM TIN, THUNG HARBOR AND SOUTHERN KINTA, ALL OWNED BY THE SAME BRITISH-MALAYSIAN INTERESTS. ALTHOUGH THE STRIKE REPORTEDLY AROSE OVER AN ASSAULT ON A LABORER BY A MANAGEMENT OFFICIAL, SUPHAP GAVE THE WALKOUT A DISTINCTLY POLITICAL TONE WHEN HE DESCRIBED THE STRIKE AS A BATTLE AGAINST FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND EXPLOITATION OF THAILAND'S NATURAL RESOURCES. IN THE INTERVIEW, SUPHAP CONTENTS HE IS NOW IN BANGKOK TO RALLY SUPPORT FROM THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER, THE LABOR COORDINATION CENTER, THE RESOURCE PROTECTION FRONT AND THE ANTI-DICTATORSHIP FRONT, ALL LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS WITH SUBSTANTIAL STUDENT INVOLVEMENT.

2. COMMENT: PAT LYONS, A UNION CARBIDE OFFICIAL SECONDED TO BILLITON NOW THAT UNION CARBIDE NO LONGER HAS AN INTEREST IN THE FORMER TEMCO OPERATION, SAID THE STRIKE IS ANOTHER WAY OF GETTING THE BIGGER COMPANIES TO STOP  
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OPERATIONS AND MAKE WAY FOR THE SMALL "ILLEGAL" MINERS

(REF A).

3. MEANWHILE MANAGEMENT OF COLGATE-PALMOLIVE HAS BEEN PROMISED AN ANSWER TO THEIR APPEAL TO THE PRIME MINISTER BY JANUARY 29 (REFTEL B). STRIKE LEADERS HAVE OFFERED TO AGREE TO COMPULSORY ARBITRATION IF COLGATE AGREES TO THE PAYMENT OF STRIKE PAY, THE YEAR-END BONUS, AND VACATION PAY LOST DURING THE STRIKE. THE COMPANY IS UNLIKELY TO ENTER COMPULSORY ARBITRATION WITH THESE ONEROUS PRE-CONDITIONS. COMPANY OFFICIALS INDICATE THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD SUPPORT THEM IN TERMINATING THE STRIKE BECAUSE COLGATE HAS SCRUPULOUSLY FOLLOWED LABOR REQUIREMENTS AND THE MAJORITY OF THE WORKERS WHO WISH RETURN TO WORK ARE ALSO PETITIONING THE PRIME MINISTER TO INTERVENE AND END THE STRIKE.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** LABOR RELATIONS, PRESS CONFERENCES, LABOR STRIKES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 28 JAN 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976BANGKO01880  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760032-0813  
**From:** BANGKOK  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760115/aaaaamvd.tel  
**Line Count:** 77  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 BANGKOK 1231, 76 BANGKOK 1338  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 04 JUN 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <04 JUN 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <09 JUN 2004 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** LABOR DEVELOPMENTS  
**TAGS:** ELAB, EMIN, TH, (SUPHAP SUGAN)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006